

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

After entry of the present amendment, Claims 13-17, 19-24, and 26-31 are pending; Claims 13-17, 22-24, and 26-31 are under consideration; and Claims 19-21 are withdrawn without prejudice or disclaimer. The present amendment amends Claims 13, 26, 28, 30 and 31; and cancels Claim 25 without prejudice or disclaimer. Support for the amended claims is self-evident from the previously presented claims; and evident from the proceeding non-limiting discussion of Applicants' disclosure. No new matter is added. As the present amendment is believed to require no further search or consideration of the prior art, Applicants request entry of the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 26 and 31 were objected to; Claims 13-17, 25, 26, and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,229,827 to Fernald et al. (hereinafter "Fernald"); Claim 24 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as anticipated by Fernald in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,278,811 to Hay; Claim 27 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Fernald in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,240,220 to Pan; and Claims 28, 29, and 31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Fernald in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,706,375 to Milhailov et al.

Regarding the objection to Claims 26 and 31, those claims are amended in view of the Examiner's comments. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to Claims 26 and 31 be withdrawn.

Addressing now the rejections of all pending claims as anticipated by or unpatentable over Fernald (summarized above), those rejections are respectfully traversed.

As noted above, amended independent Claim 13 recites the subject matter of previously presented Claim 25. Thus, Claim 13 is directed to a method including, *inter alia*,

“by varying a load applied to a compliant support block having at least a first portion of said optical fiber embedded therein, said varying the load causing said compliant support block to apply an axial strain and a radial strain upon said first portion of said optical fiber”.

Independent Claims 28, 30, and 31 recite similar subject matter. The remaining claims depend from Claims 13 and 28.

Applicants' Figure 1 illustrates a non-limiting example of the above features. An optical fiber 118 is embedded in a compliant support block 116. The application of the load, via the micrometer screw, produces a radial deformation of the compliant support block 116; and, in turn, produces an axial strain (i.e., axial stretching) upon the embedded fiber 118.¹ In addition, the application of the load squeezes the compliant support block; and, in turn, produces a compressive strain (i.e., radial compression) upon the embedded fiber 118.²

The outstanding Office Action does not address the claimed application of an axial strain and a radial strain by a compliant support block. Rather, with respect to previously presented Claim 25, the Office Action cites a portion of Fernald that only discloses “a reflective element being **axially** strain compressed” (emphasis added).³ Moreover, in Fernald, the axis of the applied force and the axis of the applied strain are always orthogonal to one another. Thus, Fernald does not teach the claimed “varying the load causing said compliant support block to apply an axial strain and a radial strain upon said first portion of said optical fiber”. The remaining applied references are not believed to cure this deficiency of Fernald.

Accordingly, for the above-stated reasons, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections of all pending claims as anticipated by or unpatentable over Fernald (summarized above) be withdrawn.

¹ Applicants' specification, para. 22.

² Applicants' specification, para. 24.

³ Office Action, 5/17/2005, page 4; citing Fernald, col. 1, line 57 – col. 2, line 13).

Dependent Claim 26 is amended to recite that "said radial component defines an axis, and an amount of the axial strain is dependent upon an acute angle formed between the axis and said optical fiber." In view of Applicants' disclosure, one skilled in the art should recognize that the orientation of the fiber with respect to the axis of radial expansion impacts the amount of axial strain (i.e., amount of stretch per length) upon the fiber. Applicants respectfully submit that the applied references do not teach this further feature.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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